

# BLAIS EXCESS & SURPLUS AGENCY OF TEXAS, INC.



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## BLAIS RETAINS SERVICES OF PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR D. BYRD GWINN

The Blais organization has retained the services of D. Byrd Gwinn as its business advisor. Mr. Gwinn will be providing strategic advice, input and direction on all business issues faced by Blais Excess & Surplus Agency of Texas Ltd. during this explosive period of growth. Highlighted below is a brief overview of Mr. Gwinn's credentials:

D. Byrd Gwinn is a former Managing Director and Senior Vice President of Chubb and Son Inc., the Underwriting Manager of Chubb Corporations multinational property and casualty insurance operations with over 5 billion in revenue. Since 1972 he has held manifold management and executive positions culminating in 1988 when he was appointed Director of the Southern Zone wherein he directed field operations in 23 states. His most recent assignment was Deputy Chief Underwriting Officer. In this capacity, Mr. Gwinn concentrated on information technology, marketing, new product development, underwriting strategies and organizational structure.

Mr. Gwinn served on the Information Technology Governance Committee, The Mergers and Acquisition Group, Expense Monitoring Committee and the Corporate Diversity Council. He held Directorships in Texas Pacific Indemnity Insurance Company, Chubb Insurance Company of New Jersey, Chubb National Insurance Company and Personal Lines Insurance Brokerage, Inc.

In 1998, Mr. Gwinn became an Equity Partner and Director of DirectAdvice.com, a Hartford, CT based firm engaged in the development and marketing of online, interactive personalized financial planning. This engagement focused on capital formation wherein he secured significant funds in 2 rounds from angel investors, corporate business partners and venture capitalists. His other roles, in marketing and sales, occasioned an alteration in the business model from one of a direct consumer thrust to a **B2B**.

During the latter half of 1999, Mr. Gwinn was recruited by the Kemper Insurance Companies for his change management skills and operating abilities to transform this mutual insurer into a leading multi national insurer. In his role as President, Northeast Region, he positioned product line strategy by market and geographic segment, instilled an acute sense of underwriting discipline coupled with channel distribution control which led to doubling of revenues and margin increases of 13% in under 2 years.

His corporate executive experience in the financial, technology and natural resource sectors combined with his endeavors as a principal in the Summit Angels Investment Group, has enabled Mr. Gwinn to witness first hand the cycles and stages of corporate development and the strategies and implementation requirements necessary to capitalize on such opportunities.

Mr. Gwinn serves and has served on the boards of a number of privately held firms and charitable organizations. He was graduated from Washington & Lee University and Harvard Business School, Program for Management Development.

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As a wholesale broker specializing in financial service products, Blais Excess & Surplus Agency of Texas, Inc.'s knowledgeable and experienced staff assists agents/brokers with the acquisition, placement and service of Directors & Officers Liability (D&O), General Partners Liability (GPL), Employment Practices Liability (EPLI), Crime (Fidelity), Kidnap & Ransom (K&R), Errors & Omissions (E&O), Media Liability and Loss Mitigation products for a variety of industries. Clients assisted include but are not limited to energy, biotech, high tech, financial institutions, profit and non-profit entities, partnerships, healthcare, companies making Initial Public Offerings and companies in the process of merger or acquisition.

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